

THE CHANGING PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CIVIL WAR SOLDIER
FROM FARMBOYS TO KILLERS: SUMMER OF 1862

A SENIOR HONORS THESIS

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Thesis

During the spring and summer of 1862, from March until September, the fighting between the contending armies of the American Civil War in the Eastern Theatre became more and more intense. When men go into combat, the emotion they feel is intensified; a frightened man will become terrified, an angry man will become enraged. I contend that a major contributing factor to the growing intensity of the combat of that summer is that the men in the ranks and many of the officers of the two armies became angry with one another. This anger at the end of the summer of 1862 produced two of the most terrible battles of the war, the second of which would be the bloodiest day in American history.

Other factors did contribute to this growing intensity. Discipline, training and experience in battle added greatly to the carnage. Early in the war, the men on both sides tended to leave the ranks during battle for the slightest of reasons, such as to help a fallen comrade get out of harm's way. There were many instances where three or four men would help a single wounded comrade. This practice ended with training and the discipline it instilled and often in the later battles wounded men remained on the field until the fighting was long over. Also early in the war, entire units would leave the battlefield, often scattered and in panic, at the slightest provocation. But by the early fall of 1862, units continued to fight even though they were taking fifty percent and higher casualties. Why would the men continue to fight long after they had lost both the ability to act as a coherent military unit or to achieve any military advantage? The answer is they were angry. They went into the battles angry, and once fighting, they become enraged and refused to quit.

The intensity of battles is most often measured by the sheer number of casualties produced or by the percentage of casualties suffered. During the spring and summer of 1862,

both of these measures went up. Neither of these measures, however, addresses how intensely the battles were fought. If five hundred men fought for twelve hours and suffered one hundred casualties, it would be a tragedy for them, but if those casualties were taken in five minutes the intensity of the fight would be on an entirely different scale. This paper will show, through the use of average casualties per minute, that the intensity of fighting during the spring and summer of 1862 increased dramatically and will also show that much of the increase is due to the fact that the men in the ranks got mad.

Who were these guys?

The population of the United States at the time of the war was centered in mostly rural areas and the men of the American Civil War armies would, in the main, be drawn from this rural landscape. It was fought on both sides by farm boys and small town store clerks, teamsters, blacksmiths and mechanics. The men who participated as soldiers in the Civil War tended to be young adults. The median age of Union soldiers was 23.5 years at enlistment while the Confederate median age was 24.2. In both armies, 65 to 70 percent of these young men were unmarried. Literacy rates were high among these young men; it has been estimated that up to 90 percent of northern soldiers and 80 percent of southern soldiers had at least some ability to read and write.¹

“Regiments were typically formed from men who came from the same area. Each company would generally contain bands of men who had known each other in civilian life.”²

¹ James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), viii. Unless otherwise annotated within the paragraph, when there is a notation at the end of a paragraph, the footnote will designate all material or ideas within the paragraph have come from the same source.

²Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, “Cowards and Heroes: Group Loyalty in the American Civil War,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 118, No. 2 (May, 2003), pp. 528.

Many of the men in the companies and regiments were brothers, cousins, and in-laws. In many cases, companies or regiments were led by a prominent local attorney, businessman or politician who had helped recruit and organize the unit and was then given a commission by the state governor. The regimental doctor was often the one who had presided over the births of many of the men in the regiments and the chaplain was a minister they had listened to every Sunday from the pulpit.³

Why did they join?

Just prior to, and especially after, the firing on Fort Sumter in April of 1861, war fever broke out in first the Southern and then the Northern sections of the country. Volunteering for the two armies was a matter of patriotism. However, patriotism was not the only factor that played into the decision when the farmers and clerks of the country made the choice to join up and, perhaps, it was not even the strongest. Duty and Honor were powerful motivating factors driving the men who volunteered and fought in 1861 and 1862. For Northern men, the sense of Duty played a strong role in motivating them to join the army. Many of them stated in letters that since they had lived under the protection of the Federal government, they were duty bound to protect that government. Southern men tended to invoke personal Honor as the reason for their joining the army. Many made the statement that to stay home would be a stain upon their good name; that honor was more important than life itself. Religious or ethnic animosity played

³ Wiley, Bell I. *The Life of Johnny Reb.* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943). *The Life of Billy Yank.* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1951), 19-23. (edition cited throughout this paper is a special printing of both books in one binding done by Book of the Month Club, New York, 1994)

little role in motivating these men. They tended to be members of some denomination of Protestant church and nearly all where white.⁴

The men who volunteered early in the war tended to have strongly held convictions, and they expressed these convictions in letters and diaries. Union soldiers tended to believe they were fighting for law and order, that is, upholding the Constitution, as well as upholding the Federal government as it then existed. At the beginning of the war, few Northern men evoked the slavery issue, but those who did, expressed themselves with harshly worded letters against the slave power of the South. They tended to point out the hypocrisy of the Southern men who stated the South was fighting for freedom. In one manner or another, many of the anti-slavery Northern men stated the desire “to cleanse the restored Union of an evil they considered a mockery of American ideals of liberty.”⁵

Southern men who volunteered also stated strong reasons for joining the fight. They often invoked the names of the Founding Fathers of the country in their reasoning. Many of them equated the struggle of the Confederacy against the Federal government with the Colonies’ struggle against Great Britain and for the very same reason, that of throwing off the yoke of tyranny. Patrick Henry was a favorite among the Southern men and was quoted often in letters and editorials. “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” was invoked in letter after letter from Southern men in the ranks during the early months of the war. Many of the men also acknowledged fighting for the continuation of slavery. They truly believed that blacks ought to remain in bondage. The attributes of color and ignorance were often employed to argue that the extension of slavery, not only in time but also space, was a natural order of this world and the

⁴ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 6, 16-23.

⁵ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 17-19.

freeing of the blacks would be not only wrong but potentially calamitous, as well as being a direct affront to Southern honor and the Southern way of life.⁶

Southerners were also able to point out another, very compelling, reason for joining the army. They were defending their homes. Many studies of fighting men have found, in line with simple common sense, that defense of their home territory is one of the strongest of motivating factors for fighting men. This factor was explicitly stated by many of the soldiers in the Southern armies. The words “hearth,” “home” and “women folk” were commonly used in letters and newspapers in the beginning of the war. That the Southern men were actually putting their bodies in the way of an invading army was universally acknowledged among these men. This factor was especially strong in the men of Virginia in 1861 and 1862. The Old Dominion had “foreign” feet tramping its roads and fields, and the men of Virginia were eager to get into the fight.⁷ When one young Southern man was captured in Virginia early in the war and asked by his Northern captors why he was fighting, his answer was both plain spoken and succinct. “I’m fighting because you’re down here.”⁸

Adventure and glory were also factors for deciding to join the army for both sides. Many men wrote of the adventure of going to war and of the possibility of winning glory for themselves. While not as often mentioned as patriotism, duty or honor, the twin motivators of adventure and glory are stated often enough in their letters that it cannot be discounted or understated. Most of these young men were from farms or small towns. The war would be the

⁶ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 20-21.

⁷ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 21-22.

⁸ Shelby Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. 1, *Fort Sumter to Perryville*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), 65.

most exciting thing that would happen in the country during their lifetimes and they did not want to miss it. Plus, through the adventure and danger of battle, they would prove their manhood.⁹

The Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century played a major role in developing the attitudes of the men in the ranks of Civil War armies. The revival of religious feeling in the country was pervasive. As Richard Carwardine points out in his article, “At mid-century one out of every three Americans came within the orbit of the major evangelical churches.” This was not just a religious movement; it also became political. The Christian leaders of the country openly spoke to their congregations of the public duties good Christians should perform. These duties included electing men who would vote for laws advancing the Christian cause. Again, by mid-century, most men who were a member of a Protestant evangelical congregation were involved in political life in some way, whether it was in a rally, public debate or as an office holder. This was not a one way street. The political managers of the time recognized both the persuasive power of the churches and the organizational finesse the churches used. The political managers were quick to take advantage of both while building the party system which emerged in the early century. Ministers were often called upon to bless political meetings and conventions. Political conventions were often run in the form of a religious camp meeting and candidates were often put forward by the parties based on religious identity.¹⁰ With this deep religious feeling and the loyalty the young men of country felt for their ministers, when those ministers called for the young men to join the armies, the young men did.¹¹

⁹ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 25-27.

¹⁰ Richard J. Carwardine, “Lincoln, Evangelical Religion, and American Political Culture in the Era of the Civil War,” *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), 30-32.

¹¹ Wiley, Bell I., *The Life of Billy Yank*, 18.

Until July of 1862 all the soldiers in the Union Army were true volunteers. During that July, the Militia Act was passed by the Federal congress which assigned quotas to states to fill the ranks.¹² But these new northern soldiers would not begin to actually enter the battle ranks until after the major fighting of that summer and early fall was over. The Confederates acted earlier than the Federals to force men into the ranks. The Confederate Congress passed the first conscription law in American history in April of 1862. There was a great deal of resistance to the Conscription Act, especially in Georgia and North Carolina, and it took the Confederates several months to set up the system and get the first draftees into the ranks.¹³ The battles through the fall of 1862 were fought on both sides, in very large part, by the original volunteers.

Motivation in Battle – at the beginning of the war

In 1861, the men of both sides expressed wishes to get into the fight. They often wrote home that they “wished to see the elephant,” a period euphemism for going into battle. They became bored with camp life and drill and wanted excitement. They also felt that being left out of the fight was somehow dishonorable to the unit of which they were a part.¹⁴

Volunteer regiments made up the vast majority of the units in both armies for the duration of the war and early in the war these volunteers were not prepared for combat. Even though it is generally accepted that military discipline is a major motivating factor for soldiers, this area was lax in the volunteer armies as a whole and in some regiments, discipline was

¹² Costa and Kahn, “Cowards and Heroes,” 524.

¹³ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 430-433.

¹⁴ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 30-31.

entirely lacking.¹⁵ Training was haphazard in most regiments and even in the late summer of 1862, some regiments were sent into battle with next to no training at all.¹⁶ Many of the officers in the early war had no military training, they were civilians in uniform, and they spent long hours reading and memorizing drill and tactics manuals and the training they gave their men in the early months consisted almost entirely of parade ground drilling and the manual of arms. Field training was practically non-existent.¹⁷

The main cause of this systemless training was a lack of direction from higher authority. In many instances, regimental commanders with no prior military experience were left to instruct their commands with no guidance from above and only a manual of arms literally in hand on the parade ground. Much of this is due to the curriculum and philosophy at West Point in the ante-bellum years. West Point was as much an engineering school prior to the war as it was a military academy. The emphasis on engineering, mathematics and administration courses left many of the graduates with a decided lack of knowledge of the actual business of training for and making war. The officers and men of most of the volunteer units would learn to make war through gritty experience.¹⁸

As well, the election of officers by the men in the ranks often led to the advancement of men who were more interested in gaining notoriety than in proper military decorum and

¹⁵ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 6.

¹⁶ Stephen W. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam*. (New York: Ticknor & Fields/Houghton Mifflin Co., 1983), 203-205.

¹⁷ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 46-48.

¹⁸ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 330-331. There were many regular army officers who did have combat command experience. They were veterans of the war in Mexico and of the fighting on the frontier with Native Americans. But they were small in number and stretched out across two armies that grew twenty fold in just a few months. Those few volunteer units under regular army officers tended to be the best units on both sides, such as A.P. Hill's Light Division and John Gibbon's Iron Brigade.

training.¹⁹ This practice often led to military disasters with officers not training the men in the ranks or being the first to run from danger. The problem became so acute in the north that it was commented on by the newspapers and magazines of the day. *Harper's Weekly* stated: "Better offend a thousand ambitious candidates for military rank than have another flight led by colonels, majors and captains." Shortly after 1st Bull Run, the Union set up military officer review boards to weed out incompetent officers, but the practice of electing officers continued until 1863.²⁰

The south had a better record of providing competent officers early in the war in spite of the common practice of electing officers. Seven of the eight military schools in the country at the time were located in states that seceded. The Virginia Military Institute alone contributed one-third of the officers of Virginia volunteer regiments in 1861. Accompanied by the alumni of The Citadel and the other schools across the south, these officers provided a better base of training for southern recruits than their northern counterparts, but it was still a spotty system at best.²¹

Political necessities also played a large part in the making of officers of men with no military experience. A civil war is as much a political war as a military fight, and both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were compelled to appoint many men to general officer rank more for their party affiliation and native state than for any military competency. Henry W. Halleck, a West Point professional and a writer of books on military practice wrote that "It seems but little better than murder to give important commands to such men as Banks, Butler, McClernand,

¹⁹Wiley, Bell I., *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 27. *The Life of Billy Yank*, 52-53.

²⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 327.

²¹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 328.

Sigel and Lew Wallace yet it seems impossible to prevent it.” The practice continued until the end of the war.²²

Due to this lack of discipline and training, much early correspondence home was filled with descriptions of men falling out of a march for berry picking or just to take a rest. There were also instances of men marching toward battle who threw away their packs, “spare” equipment and even their cartridge boxes.²³ And if the men fell out of a road march for berry picking, they were even more eager to fall out of the battle lines or leave the battlefield altogether. Extreme measures had to be taken by many officers to keep the men in the ranks during the early fighting. A Union officer wrote after the 1861 Battle of Bull Run that “when we first went into action, our men...seemed inclined to back out, but we stationed ourselves behind them and threatened to shoot the first man that turned.”²⁴

Yet in spite of all this most of the men were ready to go into battle. Men from both sides wrote home about how they felt about it. A Mississippian called it “all fun and frolic” and a New Yorker said he and the other men in his unit were “feeling like larks.”²⁵ This eagerness to enter their first fray led often to new troops in the rear of a battle formation to attempt to march through the battle lines to their front, another sign of a lack of military discipline.²⁶

²² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 328.

²³ Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. 1, 74.

²⁴ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 48-49.

²⁵ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 332-333.

²⁶ Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 28.

What happened? – Battles and Outcomes – Summer 1861 to Fall of 1862

A quick glance at the below table illustrates that the casualties suffered in the Eastern Theater from the beginning of the war through Antietam grew in either the percentage or outright numbers or both in a generally steady trend upward. While there appear to be a few early battles which seem to belie this contention, a short explanation for each should suffice to show that these do still fit into the overall pattern.

Table 1

Numbers and Percentage of Casualties in Major Battles: July 1861 through September 1862²⁷

The battles are presented in chronological order.

Battle	Confederate			Union			Overall
	Soldiers	Casualties	Percent	Soldiers	Casualties	Percent	Percent
Bull Run	32,232	1,969	6.1	28,452	1,492	5.2	5.7
Ball's Bluff	1709	153	8.9	1,720	449	26.1	17.5
Kernstown	3800	455	11.9	8,500	590	6.9	8.4
Williamsburg	31,823	1,682	5.2	40,768	2,283	5.6	5.4
Front Royal	3,000	36	1.2	1,063	83	7.8	2.9
Fair Oaks	41,816	5,729	13.7	41,797	4,384	10.5	12
Cross Keys	5,800	287	1.5	11,500	664	5.7	5.4
Port Republic	6,000	816	13.6	3,500	460	13.1	13.4
Beaver Dam Cr.	16,356	1,484	9	15,631	361	2.3	5.7
Gaines Mill	57,018	7,885	13.8	34,214	4,001	11.6	13
Savage's Station	14,000	473	3.3	26,600	1,038	3.9	3.7
Frazier's Farm	45,000	3,452	7.6	40,000	1,993	4.9	5.7
Malvern Hill	80,000	5,355	6.6	80,000	3,214	4	5.3

²⁷ Please see Appendix A for an explanation of how the numbers in this table were developed.

<i>Seven Days</i>	95,481	18,649	19.5	91,169	10,610	11.6	15.6
Cedar Mt.	16,868	1,338	7.9	15,000	2,600	17.3	12.3
2 nd Bull Run	48,527	9,108	18.8	75,696	10,096	13.3	15.4
South Mt.	18,714	2,685	14.3	28,480	2,325	8.1	10.6
Antietam ²⁸	51,844	11,724	22.6	75,316	11,657	15.5	18.3

Ball's Bluff is the first battle in the list that shows a very high percentage of casualties. This battle lasted for an entire day, from sun up to sun down, and the Union troops broke and fled at the end of the day. When they attempted to escape the battlefield, they were caught at the bottom of a bluff on a river bank and Confederate troops fired down on them, almost like the proverbial fish in a barrel. Many of the Northern troops attempted to escape by swimming the river and an unknown number of them drowned. So, the Union troops took a very high percentage of casualties in the last hour of the battle, but the Confederates took less than ten percent for the entire twelve hour fight. The intensity of the battle overall was fairly low.

It appears above that Cedar Mountain seemed to be low in casualties, but the fighting only lasted about 8 hours with a long period of very low level intensity fighting at the beginning when the two armies only exchanged long distance artillery fire while the infantry approached the field. Later, in another table, the fighting at Cedar Mountain will be shown to be a very intense fight with an overall rate of over 8 casualties per minute.

²⁸ Throughout this paper I will use both Northern and Southern designations for the battles mentioned. The North tended to name battles after physical features of the area, a river, stream or mountain. The South tended to name battles after the nearest town. So as to not show any favoritism, I have chosen to use the two designations interchangeably, although I will tend to call the battle by the name used by the section I am then discussing.

The fighting at South Mountain seems to be light as well, until it is realized that the main part of the fight only took a few hours in the afternoon and was a holding action on the part of the Confederates to allow the main body of the army to move south to Sharpsburg. As such, the fight does rank at the same level of intensity of the other battles of the late summer of 1862.

Only Port Republic and Fair Oaks appear to stand outside this general trend of low intensity fighting during the spring of 1862. There were special circumstances surrounding both these battles, but there are also indications that these battles were indicators of the trend that was to develop later in the summer.

Port Republic was the last battle of General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s Valley Campaign. Jackson’s small army was pinned between two Federal armies, both of which were larger than his own. The day prior, Jackson’s army had fought against the Federal army under John Fremont at Cross Keys. At Port Republic, Jackson was attempting to drive back the Federal army under James Shields to keep the route out of the Valley open and allow Jackson’s army to escape the trap set up by the Federals. Then later in the day, Fremont attacked the Confederate rear. The Valley army under Jackson was literally fighting for its life. Both Fremont and Shields were under tremendous pressure from the Lincoln administration to trap and destroy Jackson’s army. Under these circumstances, the battle at Port Republic was understandably intense.

Fair Oaks also had special circumstances. General George McClellan had pushed the Army of the Potomac up the James-York peninsula close enough to the Confederate capital of Richmond to hear the bells of the churches within the city.²⁹ The only fight of any significance was at Williamsburg early in the campaign. General Joseph Johnston had backed up the

²⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 454.

peninsula, giving ground and buying time for no apparent purpose, and was under tremendous pressure from President Jefferson Davis to stop the Federal advance. Johnston put together an attack, but coordination was lacking and his brigades entered the fight piecemeal. The Confederate brigades were mauled badly but were able to push the Federals back until a re-enforcing division under General Edwin Sumner was able to cross some damaged bridges across Chickahominy Creek and hit the rebels in the flank. This is the engagement that began to show the true grit of both armies in battle and began the climb in intensity which culminated at Antietam.

Guerrillas in Their Midst

In 1820 the Missouri Compromise cut the Louisiana Purchase into slave and non-slave areas. Any territory north of 36° 30', with the exception of Missouri, was to be non-slave. When Senator Stephen Douglas, he of the Lincoln-Douglas debates which would take place a few years hence, introduced a bill in 1853 to organize the remaining area of the Louisiana Purchase into formal territories, a fight broke out, first in Congress and then in the area to be organized. Southern congressmen wanted to open part of the area to slavery and Douglas, to accommodate them, re-wrote the bill to allow a local referendum to decide whether slavery would be allowed in the territory. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed in May, 1854 all hell broke loose. The passage of this bill may have done more to push the country to open civil war than any other single act. It did begin a civil war within the territory. So called "border ruffians," pro-slavery agitators from Missouri, entered Kansas to join in the voting but the practice was discovered by the permanent residents of the territory, mostly immigrants from northern states, who quickly formed a militia of "Jayhawkers" to keep them out. Raids and

counter-raids by the contending sides soon developed into a vicious guerrilla war which lasted for the next ten years.³⁰

This border war was closely watched by the country through newspapers and political developments in other areas. The situation caused the Lincoln-Douglas debates to be held and Congressmen and Senators began to physically attack one another in chambers. The Kansas-Missouri border war also gave rise to the career of John Brown who, along with his sons and other followers, committed a massacre on pro-slavery residents in Osawatimie, Kansas and then attacked the federal arsenal in Harper's Ferry, Virginia.³¹ This last created an urgency in the south and led to the reorganization and upgrading of many state militias, many of which would later turn into guerrilla, or as they were called at the time, ranger or partisan bands.

There is an American tradition for guerrilla warfare. The wars between the Native Americans and white settlers were almost all guerrilla style hit-and-run affairs. From the earliest fighting in the new colonies in Massachusetts and Virginia right up until the last wars with the Apache in the Southwest, these wars were a series of raids and counter-raids with very few large battles. The American Revolution also had a strong guerrilla flavor. While guerrilla tactics were used against the British in all the embattled areas of the colonies, that style of fighting was primarily used in the South, most famously under "The Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, in South Carolina. Marion was a southern hero and his exploits well known to Southerners through their reading of a popular biography of him. To the southern mind, it was natural for a man to grab the nearest weapon and go forth to stop an invasion; so, when calls went out from many voices

³⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 122-123, 145-153.

³¹ Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. 1, 26-28.

across the southern states in 1861 for men to form into guerrilla bands, thousands did so and attacks on Union loyalists and garrisons commenced almost immediately.³²

In the eastern theatre, this was especially true in Virginia where early encroachment by the Federal army across the Ohio and Potomac Rivers caused great alarm through out the state. A great many partisan bands formed in the area and by the very nature of a guerrilla civil war, the internecine fighting became vicious very quickly with families fighting one another in local feuds as much as for either cause in the greater war. By the fall of 1861 guerrilla raids were being conducted throughout western Virginia and the Union army had much difficulty dealing with the partisans. Guerrilla bands under Albert Jenkins, Turner Ashby and many others ran roughshod through the area from the Shenandoah Valley to the Ohio River and as early as June of that year, George McClellan issued an official policy to deal with the partisans using the “severest rules of military law.” The army also allowed local loyalist bands to form in order to combat the Confederate partisans in the area. A full blown guerrilla struggle ensued that took more than three years to suppress.³³

In March of 1862 the governor of Virginia, John Letcher, created the Virginia State Rangers. The act was meant to curtail the worst of the behavior of the partisans in Virginia and to bring them under the command of the governor and the local military commanders. The existing partisan bands were formed into ten legitimate companies, but even more men joined bands still independent of the governor’s system and none of them stopped the depredations. During this time a Union officer said the partisans were worse than savages and wrote of one victim that: “His abdomen had been ripped open, his bowels extracted, his head severed from the

³² Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009) 10, 26-27.

³³ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 32-33.

trunk and placed all gashed and bleeding in the cavity.” The problem became so bad that even officers of the Confederate Army stationed in Virginia began to complain about them. General Henry Heth called them “bands of robbers and plunderers...notorious thieves and murderers, more ready to plunder friends than foes.”³⁴

The Confederate Congress added fuel to the fire when they passed the Partisan Ranger Act in April of 1862. It was a reaction to calls from many areas of the South, especially where Union troops were threatening to invade or in already conquered areas, such as the demand made in *DeBow's Review*, and cited by Sutherland, to give up “all fastidious notions of military etiquette” and “by any and every means” to kick the Federal troops out. Mirroring Letcher's act in Virginia, the legislation was meant to bring into the fold of normal military affairs the various independent guerrilla bands across the south and to expand their military usefulness. What it really did was to intensify and deepen the guerrilla war in the border areas. The Act legitimized many of the independent partisan leaders by commissioning them with officer rank in the Confederate Army, but many of the leaders continued to operate independently of military authority. By this legitimization, the Act re-energized and gave new impetus to the guerrilla war. In areas that Union officers in earlier months had reported quiet, the weeks following the passage of the Act saw these same officers reporting of the guerrillas that it was “utterly impossible to beat them far back.”³⁵

Union soldiers believed themselves to be vulnerable to attack or capture, and hence torture and mutilation, at any time. They could not go out of camp in less than groups of one hundred lest they be attacked. Southern guerrilla bands, as all guerillas group anywhere, would

³⁴ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 91-96.

³⁵ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 93-95. *DeBow's Review* was a monthly magazine published in New Orleans during the middle years of the 19th century. It enjoyed the widest circulation of any Southern published magazine during the time of the Civil War.

come out of the mountains and woods, attack a supply train or small column of troops and then sink back into the background. At other times, the attacks would come in the form of a single sniper shot and the sniper then go back to his farm to pick up his hoe and work his fields. This understandably angered and frightened the troops of the north. They began to retaliate, with or without official sanction, by burning the homes and destroying crops of suspected guerrillas and hunting them down and shooting them in cold blood. About the time the Confederate Congress passed the Partisan Act, a Pennsylvania soldier had this to say after he had seen a friend lying dead and abused in the road at the hands of guerrillas in Virginia: "Our boys have born with the damning mode of warfare and suffered their comrades picked off until forbearance has ceased to be a virtue. We are fully able to cope with them at their own game. No more prisoners is the watch word."³⁶

John Fremont had been in charge of Union troops in Missouri soon after the outbreak of hostilities. He had dealt with the "border ruffians" with a hard hand and when he was transferred to western Virginia, he brought that hardened attitude with him, as well as some experienced guerrilla fighters. The Kansans Fremont brought with him fought the Virginia based guerrillas with many of the same tactics the guerrillas used. The Kansans donned Confederate uniforms in order to gain knowledge from guerrillas and their sympathizers and attacked guerrilla camps with savagery. Fremont also began a system of drum head courts martial with hangings immediately following. "The effect was to correct a mistaken belief in immunity for their crimes," said Fremont.³⁷

All of this spun into a spiral of violence and retribution that began in the summer of 1861 and lasted for the duration of the war. A southern sympathizer would shoot a northern soldier

³⁶ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 33-34, 96-97.

³⁷ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 96.

and the other men in the soldier's unit, who most likely were related to or knew the soldier for many years in civilian life, would burn the nearest house in revenge. Southerners would then ambush more northern troops and another house and perhaps the crops would be burned. And guerrillas would shoot more Yanks, who would then hunt someone down and kill them in cold blood. Sometimes they got the right man, sometimes not. This cycle would go on and on and instead of stamping out the guerrilla danger, would as often as not create more hostility in the southern civilian population and convince more southern men to join the ranks of the guerrillas. In the spring of 1862 just before the heavy fighting began a northern soldier wrote home: "The more I see of this war in Western Virginia the more thoroughly am I convinced that nothing short of extermination to all who are engaged in this rebellion will give peace to this section. But when will the powers that be realize the true state of affairs? I would to God that the Rebels would raise the black flag, and our government meet them under the same."³⁸

The soldiers of the Union were ready for all out combat.

Motivation in Battle – late summer and fall of 1862

For most of these men in the ranks, their first exposure to combat was in the smaller battles of the summer and fall of 1861. During this period the men of both sides tended to lose their original enthusiasm for "seeing the elephant." They often wrote home that battle experience was not what they had been told it would be. It was not glorious and adventuresome, but was bloody, nasty and horrifying. They had been surprised by the experience and shocked.

³⁸ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 90, 160.

Their eagerness for battle was dampened and replaced by seriousness to get the job done. Many wrote that the change in the men and the units in general was actually visible.³⁹

The change in the men who had been through the early battles did not end their desire to finish the war. Men on both sides wrote home that they would continue, but the bragging stopped. Grim duty and honor became the determining motivators for those men who remained in combat roles during the winter 1861-1862. Many times after the initial battles, soldiers wrote home to express the sentiment that “I have no desire to get into another fight, but if duty calls I am ready to go.”⁴⁰

The duty these men felt was not only that which they had originally brought with them. Both armies went through a long training period during the winter of 1861-1862 when there was little fighting done. In the southern army, Joseph Johnston, Thomas Jackson, A.P. Hill and other professional soldiers who were mostly West Point graduates, led a program to train the volunteers up to army standards.⁴¹ The north went through a similar period of relative quiet that was used for training. President Lincoln had called for George McClellan to take over the Army of the Potomac within days of the Union defeat at 1st Bull Run and the general began a training period that lasted eight months. At the end of that time, McClellan had forged from what he himself had called “a mere collection of regiments cowering on the banks of the Potomac” into a true army, and the men of the Army of the Potomac knew it.⁴²

³⁹ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 32-34.

⁴⁰ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 35.

⁴¹ Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 27. Freeman, Douglas Southall. *Lee's Lieutenants*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 159.

⁴² Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. 1, 99-101, 264-265.

With this training, unit pride began to make its appearance. The men in the regiments took pride in the actions of their regiment, all the men in the regiment were from the same area, they represented their town or county, and they wanted the people back home to be proud. As the fighting began in the spring of 1862 and the units began to gain reputations within the armies for battlefield prowess, unit pride took on a whole new meaning. Letters home began to tell of the men's pride of what their regiment had done in a battle or to belittle the lack of accomplishment, or even cowardice, of neighboring regiments.⁴³

Early in the war, the men of both sides wrote home of honor and duty as main motivating factors for going into combat. After they saw their first combat, another factor entered into their writing with more frequency. They spoke of the shame of cowardice. These men fought side by side with family, kin and other men whom they had known all their lives. Many of them could not bear the thought of being branded a coward in the eyes of their peers. They wrote disparagingly of men who left the ranks just prior to or during a battle. They often wrote they would rather die than be seen leaving a battlefield before ordered to do so.⁴⁴

The feelings of these men as they were going into battle and while in battle began to change in other ways as well. Prior to the large scale fighting, the men of the South often expressed the desire for retribution for the coming invasion of their territory. They spoke of taking revenge for any destruction done to the South. Once the fighting had begun in earnest, the rhetoric for vengeance took on a sharper tone. Soldiers of both North and South began to express outright hatred of the enemy. A Georgia lieutenant wrote his wife to "Teach my children to hate them with that bitter hatred that will never permit them to meet under any circumstances

⁴³McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 82-84.

⁴⁴McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 77-80.

without seeking to destroy each other.” At nearly the same time, an Ohio captain wrote of the men he served with in West Virginia that “Hate rankled in their breasts. Oh, how strong is this passion, this desire for revenge.” Robert Gould Shaw, who was from a prominent Boston family, and would later become the Colonel of the 54th Massachusetts Colored Volunteers, but while still a captain after the Battle of Cedar Mountain in August of 1862, “longed for the day when we shall attack the Rebels with an overwhelming force and annihilate them. May I live long enough to see them running before us hacked to little pieces.”⁴⁵

The Union Army of Virginia was constituted in June of 1862 under Major General John Pope from three separate smaller commands, two of which had been fighting guerrillas in western Virginia for many months.⁴⁶ The soldiers of these commands were ready to get at any enemy who would stand and fight. A Pennsylvania soldier wrote “We have had enough of this child’s play here. In the language of Jim Lane, I would ‘lay waste devastate hurt somebody.’”⁴⁷

The policies of Union General John Pope exacerbated the drive for vengeance on both sides. Pope issued several general orders in July of 1862 which were either initiated or approved by the Lincoln administration and were aimed toward the civilian population of northern Virginia.⁴⁸ These orders directed the Army of Virginia to live off the countryside as much as possible through the forced requisition of foodstuffs from the farms of northern Virginia. The orders also included ones sanctifying the burning of homes and the confiscation of property for

⁴⁵McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 149-153.

⁴⁶ Pope’s Army of Virginia was formed by combining the commands of Nathaniel Banks, John Fremont and Irwin McDowell. All three commands had been fighting guerillas in northern or western Virginia prior to the consolidation and had been thoroughly thrashed by Jackson in the Valley Campaign. Only McDowell was a regular army officer, trained at West Point. The other two were political generals.

⁴⁷ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 97. Jim Lane was an anti-slavery politician and leader of Kansas “Jayhawkers.” His band of anti-guerrillas was known to be among the more violent of the groups fighting in the Kansas-Missouri border conflict.

⁴⁸ John J. Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 13.

guerrilla sympathizers as well as the shooting of civilians without benefit of trial should they be caught shooting at Northern soldiers or attempting to return to their homes after they had been put beyond Union lines. Northern soldiers let go of any softer attitudes toward civilians and Southerners in general. “Our men now believe they have a perfect right to rob, tyrannize, threaten & maltreat any one they please, under the Orders of Gen Pope,” wrote one soldier in his army. The Union soldiers in Pope’s army began to loot, pillage and destroy with abandon and impunity. Southern soldiers, and most especially and understandably soldiers from Virginia, were outraged.⁴⁹

The soldiers of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia were made well aware of this destruction. Through newspaper accounts, letters and civilians who had personally witnessed the destruction and other outrages, the officers and men of the Southern army learned of the events of late July and early August in the areas under the occupation of the Federal Army of Virginia. Pope had stated early on that his headquarters would be in the field and mobile. The men of the Southern army began to say that “the man with the movable headquarters had better commence moving.”⁵⁰ By early August, a portion of the Army of Northern Virginia was on the move, intent on moving Pope and ending the destruction. Lee himself stated “the miscreant Pope...ought to be suppressed.”⁵¹

What happened? – Battles and Outcomes – Summer 1861 to Fall of 1862, part 2

⁴⁹ Daniel E. Sutherland, *The Emergence of Total War*. (Fort Worth: Ryan Place Publishers, 1996), 21-23.

⁵⁰ Sutherland, *The Emergence of Total War*, 31.

⁵¹ Foote, *The Civil War*, vol. 1, 589.

The table below illustrates the growing intensity of battle through the summer of 1862. As previously stated, the intensity of battle, as measured by casualties per minute, show a strong and steady upward trend through the time frame discussed in this paper.

Table 2

Intensity of Battle as measured by Combat Casualties per Minute
The battles are presented in chronological order.

Battle	Date	Casualties	Duration Of Battle: hours	Casualties per Minute
1 st Bull Run	21 July 1861	3,461	11:45	4.9
Ball's Bluff	21 Oct	602	12 (appr)	.8
Kernstown	23 March 1862	1,045	9	1.9
Williamsburg	5 May	3,965	13	5
Front Royal	23 May	119	5 (appr)	2.5
Fair Oaks	31 May	10,113	11:30	14.6
Cross Keys	8 June	951	10 (appr)	1.5
Port Republic	9 June	1,276	5	4.25
Beaver Dam Creek	26 June	1,845	6	5.1
Gaines Mill	27 June	11,886	6 (appr)	39.62
Savage's Station	29 June	1,511	4	6.3
Frazier's Farm	30 June	5,445	6 (appr)	15.1
Malvern Hill	1 July	8,569	8.5	16.8
Cedar Mountain	9 August	3,938	8	8.2
2 nd Bull Run	29-30 August	19,204	17	18.8
South Mountain	14 September	5,010	11	7.5
Antietam	17 September	23,381	11	35.4 ⁵²

⁵² Please see Appendix B for an explanation of this table.

Prior to the opening of the Seven Days' Campaign in late June of that summer, only one battle surpassed five casualties per minute and that was Fair Oaks, the battle previously indicated to mark the beginning of the high intensity fighting of that summer and fall. Ball's Bluff, which had a high percentage of casualties, was actually a very low intensity fight for most of its duration with only a high intensity, one-sided fight in the last hour of the day. Even at Port Republic, where Jackson's Valley Army was nearly trapped and fought for its life, there were only four and a quarter casualties per minute. As compared to what was to come, these were low intensity fights.

Starting with the battles of the Seven Days, beginning with Beaver Dam Creek and ending with Malvern Hill, there is a general trend upward throughout that summer of the number of casualties per minute. There are several spikes in the table, as well as a few low points, but even the low level fights of the late summer do not go down low enough in the casualties per minute rating to equal the low level of intensity of the battles prior to the opening of the Seven Days, with the exception of Fair Oaks. Also, beside the extreme spike at Gaines' Mill which only lasted approximately six hours, each major battle increases in the casualty per minute rating until Antietam surpasses them all by a large margin.

Beginning with Beaver Dam Creek, when the southern men felt as if their backs were literally against the walls of Richmond, they attacked with all out fury. And once they got started, they did not stop. They defeated the northern men time and again during the summer and yet the northern men keep coming back for more. The southerners got frustrated and angry, and became even angrier when they pushed the Federal armies back and saw the destruction of private property and homes done by the northern men.

By the beginning of the Seven Days, the northern men had endured every kind of hardship the guerrillas of Virginia could dish out. They had been shot at, seen their friends mutilated, had their supply lines harassed and sometimes cut and could not get at that enemy. Then during that summer they were attacked, caught off guard, out-generalled, out maneuvered and generally made fools of. The entire country was asking them when they would win a battle and even a little old lady got into that act when she stood by the road and warned units of the Army of the Potomac, which had absorbed the Army of Virginia in the prior two weeks, not to go up South Mountain. “Don’t you go,” she told them, “some of you will get hurt.”⁵³ The northern men were not amused.

What Actually Transpired – The Battles of Late Summer, 1862

The portion of his army that Lee sent first to confront Pope was under the command of General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson. Jackson moved from the Peninsula across northern Virginia and met Pope at Cedar Mountain on 9 August 1862. The fighting began about noon with a long range artillery exchange and continued with infantry charges in the late afternoon. The battle was over shortly after eight that evening. In that approximately eight hours of fighting, the two sides took 4,000 casualties from the 31,000 men involved. This casualty rate was over 12 percent of the combined armies; a rate of more than 8 men killed or wounded per minute. It would prove to be only a warm up to the human destruction to come. After the battle, Pope’s men reverted to the wanton destruction they had begun in July.⁵⁴

Over the next ten days, the remainder of Lee’s army came up. The soldiers personally viewed the destruction Pope’s army had left behind and many of them wrote about it in letters

⁵³ Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 137.

⁵⁴ Sutherland, *The Emergence of Total War*, 37-49, 57.

home. They called it “unbridled license,” “desolation and devastation,” and many were stunned or outraged themselves. When Lee opened the Second Manassas Campaign, one of his first moves was to send Jackson against Pope’s supply station at Manassas Junction. Jackson’s army flanked Pope and got to the supply station with little incident. They took everything they could carry and destroyed and burned what they could not. It was “the grandest conflagration I ever witnessed,” wrote one southern veteran.⁵⁵

Jackson fell back to a railroad cut to await Longstreet, Lee and, of course, Pope. A portion of Pope’s army came within striking distance of Jackson on the evening of 28 August. Jackson ordered his men to attack. The two sides fought for two hours and lost one third of the men engaged. The two armies repositioned and on 29 August, Pope ordered a general attack against Jackson. The fighting was extremely intense and lasted most of the day. Both sides took heavy casualties. Longstreet’s corps did arrive on the battlefield in the afternoon but was unable to enter the fight due to the position of Fitz-John Porter’s Union corps on Longstreet’s flank. On the third day of the fight, Pope again ordered a general assault. The fighting on Jackson’s front was so intense and heated, that when one of his brigades ran out of ammunition, they continued the fight by throwing stones at the Yankees to their front. Longstreet was finally able to launch a counter-attack that afternoon and drove Pope’s army from the field. But the Union troops did not scatter, rout and run as they had after the first battle on this field. They retreated toward Washington and when they arrived, they were not entirely disorganized and many units were in perfect order. Lee lost 9,100 in the three days of fighting, and Pope lost more than 10,000. The

⁵⁵ Sutherland, *The Emergence of Total War*, 60, 65-67.

combat intensity reached over nineteen casualties per minute. As one Mississippi soldier put it, “We whipped the Yankees worse this time than they was ever whipped before.”⁵⁶

But the Yankee soldiers did not feel like they were whipped. The soldiers of Pope’s army thought they had simply been out classed in the general officer department and they stated so in no uncertain terms. Wilder Dwight of the 2nd Massachusetts wrote, “we allowed them, impotently and with fatal blindness, allowed them to outgeneral us.”⁵⁷ This made the soldiers of the north angry. They wrote home of the bitterness of having to fight against both the southern soldiers and their own generals.⁵⁸

Within days of the battle of Second Manassas, Lee set his army marching to Maryland. He felt that the Northern soldiers would be demoralized and that his army, even if undersupplied, would still be capable of delivering a fatal, and perhaps, final blow. But the soldiers in his army were becoming worn and bedraggled. A woman in Frederick, Maryland witnessed the Army of Northern Virginia marching through the town. She wrote a friend in Baltimore that she “felt humiliated at the thought that this horde of ragamuffins could set our grand army of the Union at defiance.”⁵⁹

The Confederates were not only optimistic for the prospect of battle, they were eager for it. They told a Frederick doctor “that they have never been whipped, but have driven the Yankees before them whenever they could find them.” And they planned on doing it again, but they were wearing down. They had been marching and fighting for months and their clothes were wearing out and they were, in thousands of instances, barefoot. As they marched, the

⁵⁶ Sutherland, *The Emergence of Total War*, 77-87.

⁵⁷ Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 81.

⁵⁸ Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 75.

⁵⁹ Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 64-65, 86.

Southern army left its supply trains behind and the men began to feed off uncooked green corn and unripe apples from roadside fields and orchards. By the time they got through the South Mountain fighting and into the lines at Sharpsburg, many of them were sick with digestion problems.⁶⁰

But they were ready for the fight. The fighting started early in the morning of the 17th of September on the northern end of the field. General Joseph Hooker led his Union corps in an advance against a mixed corps composed mostly of Jackson's men, reinforced by Hood's division of Longstreet's corps. Hooker's advance was initially successful and Hood was called on to stop the Yankees. Hood's men had left their supply wagons far behind in the heavy marching of the campaign and had been surviving on whatever they could find along the road. Their wagons had caught up during night and they were preparing the first real meal they would have eaten in several days but they were called into line before the food was ready. When they went into line, they were understandably angry and they attacked like angry men and they paid for it; one of their regiments lost 80 percent casualties. Later in the day, when Hood was asked where his division was, Hood answered, "dead on the field." Throughout the days' fighting, the struggle was intense and unrelenting. Survivors of the fighting earlier that summer, the Seven Days, Cedar Mountain and 2nd Bull Run, described Antietam as the worst fighting they ever saw. It was at a pitch that is hardly ever reached.⁶¹

Many of the men on both sides realized the nature of the battle, the scope and intensity of it, even during and definitely as soon as, the fighting ended. They began writing letters and making entries in their diaries almost immediately. A Wisconsin man in the Iron Brigade

⁶⁰ Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 73, 84, 87, 162.

⁶¹ Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 197-203.

summed it up for men of both sides when he wrote, “I suppose the great fight of the Rebellion was fought on the 17 at least I hope so for none of us ever wants to see another such...”⁶²

The battle at Antietam lasted about 12 hours with two lulls of just under an hour each during the day. The actual fighting lasted about 11 hours and produced a total of approximately 23,000 casualties. That is an intensity of over 38 casualties per minute.

Another Way To Look At It

Many of the battles of the late summer of 1862 had very large numbers of soldiers involved. While a few of the earlier battles had more than 50,000 battlefield participants, many of the later battles had one and half times that many, and a few battles had more than double the number of soldiers involved. As such, more casualties per minutes would, in some respects, be expected. To answer this, I have looked at the number of casualties per minute per one thousand soldiers in combat.

While not as clearly and cleanly displayed as in the previous tables, the following table does show that even in a casualty per thousand troop compilation, battle intensity during the spring and summer of 1862 rose, with the spiked exemptions of Ball’s Bluff and Port Republic which have been addressed previously. This table and graph show explicitly, that beginning with the battle of Fair Oaks, the intensity of battle rose far above the battles of earlier that year and of the previous year.

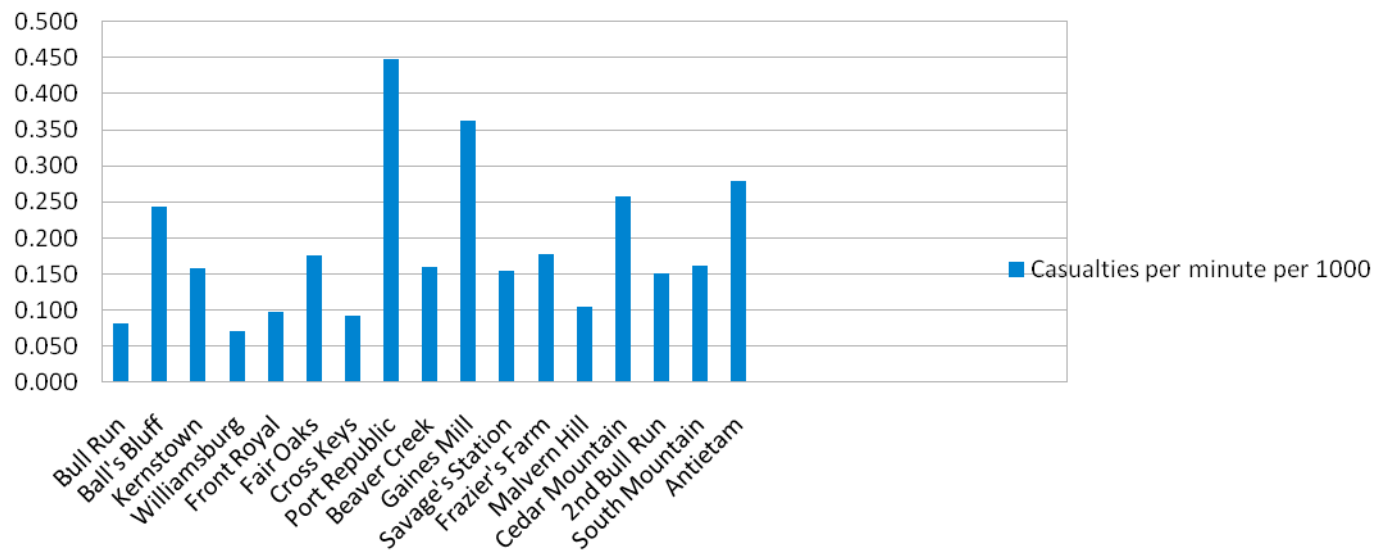
Table 3

Casualties per minute per 1000 combatants

Battles are listed in chronological order

⁶² Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 305.

Battle	Total Soldiers	Total Casualties	Duration of Combat – Hours	Duration of Combat – Minutes	Casualties per minute	Casualties per minute per 1000
Bull Run	60684	3461	11.75	705	4.91	0.081
Ball's Bluff	3429	602	12	720	0.84	0.244
Kernstown	12300	1045	9	540	1.94	0.157
Williamsburg	72591	3965	13	780	5.08	0.070
Front Royal	4063	119	5	300	0.40	0.098
Fair Oaks	83613	10112	11.5	690	14.66	0.175
Cross Keys	17300	951	10	600	1.59	0.092
Port Republic	9500	1276	5	300	4.25	0.448
Beaver Creek	31987	1845	6	360	5.13	0.160
Gaines Mill	91232	11886	6	360	33.02	0.362
Savage's Station	40600	1511	4	240	6.30	0.155
Frazier's Farm	85000	5445	6	360	15.13	0.178
Malvern Hill	160000	8569	8.5	510	16.80	0.105
Cedar Mountain	31868	3938	8	480	8.20	0.257
2 nd Bull Run	124223	19204	17	1020	18.83	0.152
South Mountain	47194	5010	11	660	7.59	0.161
Antietam	127160	23381	11	660	35.43	0.279



Some Things That Did Not Happen

It has been suggested that the growing level of intensity can be explained through other reasons; that training, experience, or other intangibles caused the soldiers to be able to withstand the terrible violence of that summer. While the soldiers did gain invaluable experience that spring and early summer, experience in skirmishes in no way can account for the intensity in the large scale battles of that summer.

Added training has been put forward as an explanation for the higher battle intensities but there was little time for training once the campaign season began. The season began with General George McClellan moving the Army of the Potomac to the James-York Peninsula in March. From that time until September, both Northern and Southern troops were either fighting or marching the entire spring and summer. Northern and Southern troops in the Eastern Theatre marched several hundred miles during those months, and during that six month period, there were fourteen general engagements, at least six other smaller battles, several dozen skirmishes, and unnumbered ambushes and other encounters. There would have been very little time for any in depth training for either army.

Experience can account for some of the growing intensity, but historically, experienced troops usually begin to take fewer casualties. Even during the period, officers understood that inexperienced troops took many more casualties than veterans. Veterans learned when to take cover from both musket fire and cannonade, rookie troops were slower to react and took unnecessary casualties, and usually ran when they got hit hard. Experience, or the lack thereof, cannot explain the high casualty rates of the later summer battles.

Conclusion

The fighting during the summer of 1862 escalated to a crescendo pitch at the Battle of Antietam. Many reasons account for this. The men had been in the armies for a year or more and had gained many skills necessary to be an efficient soldier. The officers had learned how to use their commands more efficiently. Both officers and men had grown used to combat and unit cohesion had jelled. Something else happened to these men as well. The men in the ranks became angry.

The soldiers from both sides had lost friends and family members during the early battles of the war. They had been in the battle line, sometimes literally standing beside the man, when their brother, cousin, son or father was shot or hit by a shell. They had seen with their own eyes the death of this loved one. Many of the survivors vowed revenge and when they returned to battle, their grief turned to anger.

The Southern soldiers had been winning battles for more than a year. When they saw the destruction done by Pope's army in northern Virginia, they became incensed and vowed vengeance. By the time of late summer, they had been constantly fighting and marching for five months. Their clothes were worn out, many of them had marched themselves barefoot, they were sick from bad food or hungry from lack of food, and still trying to repel an invader from Virginia. But they had beaten the northern men many times before and at Antietam, they were, by God, going to do it again.

The men of the north were equally angry. They knew they were greater in numbers and had better equipment. They also knew they had not been out-soldiered but had been outgeneraled every time the two armies met. The northern men had been defeated, chased, and defeated again. Guerrillas had harassed them, bushwhacked and killed them and burnt bridges and generally made the Union men's lives miserable. The Federal men were tired, frustrated and

humiliated. They were tired of all that and of the letters from home and the articles in the newspapers asking when they would win a battle. By the time of Antietam, the men in the ranks were determined to win in spite of their generals and out there across the rolling hills and fields was an enemy they could lay their hands on. So they did.

Appendix A

Where the numbers came from for Table 1

Many of the figures listed in this table are from Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson's *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage*. This book was well researched and has been cited by numerous other authors. However, there has been quite a lot of research done since that book was published and many of the numbers included in that work have been superseded. Also, at the time the book was published there was some question as to the numbers it contained. I have done my own independent research of several other sources and either verified the numbers in McWhiney or have chosen to use numbers from other sources which seem to be either updated from newer research or were developed from a wider primary base.

The other difficulty with McWhiney is they did not report casualty figures for all the battles I wished to include. For those battles I have gone to several sources and chosen the best figures I could find and verify. Shelby Foote's trilogy *The Civil War* is a good starting point for this as he includes casualty figures for almost all the battles described in his text. I have also relied heavily on several books by James McPherson as well as *The Emergence of Total War* by Daniel Sutherland. Numbers have also come from several other books listed in the extended bibliography or I have used those books to verify the numbers I have actually used.

Although I have looked through the Official Records of the war, I chose not to use the numbers from those documents as so many reported figures were from incomplete returns at the time the documents were filed.

Another difficulty I encountered was separating out the number of prisoners taken. I wanted numbers that reflected the intensity of the actual fighting. While prisoners may be taken due to the intensity of a battle, many times, prisoners were taken in the aftermath of a battle or were stragglers picked up along the roadways. The usual practice during the war was to report all prisoners taken during the course of a day, wherever or whenever those prisoners were actually captured. Therefore, I did not include the prisoners in the casualty numbers in this paper and have used only the numbers of dead and wounded wherever possible.

Also, wherever possible, reserves or other personnel not actually in the fight have not been included. No one can doubt the fighting at Sharpsburg was very intense and yet McClellan withheld an entire Corp from the battle. Had those troops been included in this and the other table, the numbers would have been skewed and not shown what actually happened on the field.

There are some battles during the time period that are not included in this table due to not being able to find or verify various numbers under the heading listings. Often times, this was simply an inability to lock down the starting time and/or ending time of the battle. Civil War soldiers and officers were notorious for listing times in phrases such as: the fight began at earliest dawn, or the battle was ended by darkness. For the purposes of this paper, if the duration of a battle could not be approximated to less than half an hour leeway, the battle was left out of the tables.

Appendix B

The casualty figures in this table are the combined casualties of the two armies in Table 1. I then took the number of hours the battle lasted, converted that into minutes and divided that into the number of casualties. I believe this number, casualties per minute, is a very good indicator as to how intensely the men in the ranks were actually fighting and how much they actually wanted to kill each other.

I have left out many battles that I would otherwise would liked to have included due to not being able to accurately judge the time the battle took to fight. Due to this lack of records several battles that may have added or subtracted to the understanding of the trend I have recorded have been entirely left out. One of these was Chantilly at the end of the 2nd Manassas campaign which was reported to be a very intense battle. I could find no account which listed the actual times for when the fight began or when it ended. For other battles I was able to determine when the battle began or when it ended but not both. If I was unable to lock down the duration of time to less than plus or minus fifteen minutes, the battle was not included in this table.

In the table, there are several duration of battle times which are marked as (appr). In these battles, the duration of battle time has been reduced to plus or minus fifteen minutes but could not be made more accurate with the records at hand.

The fighting at 2nd Manassas is the only battle in this time frame which stretched over two days' fighting. The seventeen hours listed in the table is the combination of time spent fighting for the two days. The fighting on both days did not begin until afternoon and hence such a low number of hours actually spent fighting. The fighting at Groveton on the eve of 2nd Manassas has been separated from the very beginning. Officers of both sides reported their casualties from Groveton in separate returns from those taken in the next two days. I was unable to determine the exact length of the fight at Groveton, but from approximations, the casualty per minute rate was well into the teens.

I have gone over many records, books and articles to arrive at the best estimations of casualties and the durations of battle as possible. Countless hours was spent sorting, researching and recording these numbers, but as with all Civil War records, the numbers still have to be taken with at least a small measure of salt.

The Changing Psychology of the Civil War Soldier;
From Farmboys to Killers: Summer of 1862

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